

Mr xxxxx xxxxxxxxx
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24th January 2017

Re: Freedom of Information Act 2014

Our Reference Number: FOI/2017/018

Dear Sir

I refer to your email dated 19th January 2017 in which you request certain information held by the Department of Education and Skills under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

I wish to make an application to access records held by the Department of Education under the Freedom of Information Act.

Among the records I am seeking access to include:

**** The latest available bi-monthly child protection report presented to the Department's of Education's management board; Note: I do not require information identifying individual children;***

Your request above is granted - a Record Schedule and a copy of the Sept –Oct 2016 is enclosed.

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you can make an appeal in relation to this matter, you can do so by writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 RC96 or by e-mail to foi@education.gov.ie. You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification, where a day is defined as a working day excluding, the weekend and public holidays, however, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances.

The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this body.

Should you wish to discuss the above, please contact me at telephone 090-6484264 or email paul_haynes@education.gov.ie.

Your request for information concerning other sections of the Department will be dealt with under separate cover by those sections.

The primary statutory responsibility for child protection rests with the Child and Family Agency (Tusla). The role of the Department of Education and Skills is to provide guidance to schools and other educational organisations in implementing child protection policy and referral of any child protection concerns to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) in accordance with Children First Guidelines, which are followed in all cases by Department officials.

It is the responsibility of the relevant school authority to ensure that the procedures for dealing with child protection concerns are followed in accordance with the Department guidance, Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools. School Authorities are not required to report child protection concerns in respect of their employees directly to the Department.

However, child protection concerns can be brought to the attention of staff in the Department. Where this occurs the Department's Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Concerns brought to the attention of Staff Employed by the Department of Education and Skills are followed in relation to these child protection concerns.

While the Department has no role in investigating individual child protection concerns, the Department is very conscious of ensuring any information received by the Department is transmitted to the appropriate authorities in accordance with Children First Guidelines. Tusla and the Gardaí have the necessary statutory powers and expertise to conduct investigations in this very sensitive area. Any referral by the Department involving a school makes clear that the agency can contact the Department if they are not satisfied with the school's role or cooperation during the course of their work.

Yours sincerely

Paul Haynes - Decision Maker
Child Protection Unit
Schools Division